



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

October 24, 1996

Dear Resident:

This letter will update you on recent events associated with the NL Industries/Taracorp Superfund site, Granite City, IL. As a recap, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been cleaning residential yards with high lead levels since 1994. This is the third year of the cleanup and we are pleased to report that over 200 of the most contaminated yards have been cleaned to date. There are over 1,300 yards that will be addressed eventually, although not all of them are as contaminated as the ones that we have currently cleaned.

You may also remember from our previous updates that the City of Granite City and the companies responsible for the contamination filed a motion for a Temporary Restraining Order/Permanent Injunction in Federal District Court to stop EPA from doing those cleanups in Granite City. We are pleased to announce that on August 22, Judge Foremen of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois denied that request. Essentially, the judge stated that he did not have the authority to stop an ongoing Superfund cleanup and that the City and the other parties did not have the right to ask him to do so. Finally, the judge said that, even if the court did have the authority to make this decision, the City's claims were not valid.

This decision will have an important impact on the nature and pace of cleanup in Granite City. The cleanup programs in Venice, Madison and Eagle Park Acres are not affected by this decision and any work being conducted there will continue without interruption. However, in Granite City, this means that EPA will begin to conduct the yard cleanups on a block by block basis and not by the piecemeal approach that we have been forced to follow due to Granite City's motions. This ought to increase the pace at which the yards are cleaned which means the project may be completed sooner than anticipated. In spite of this recent court decision, the City still maintains that EPA has no authority to clean the easements in front of each house. This means that even after EPA completes it's cleanup on a yard, the property cannot be considered totally clean. We are presently attempting to resolve this situation. Finally, while the Agency is committed to a block by block cleanup approach, if you have been told that your yard is on the priority list for this year's work, your yard will be addressed this year.

There are other aspects of the Superfund project that have been active as well. EPA has done or will be doing the following:

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



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- We started, in late September, a program to sweep the streets around the smelter to control lead dust.
- We provided information on this Superfund cleanup to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) for a grant application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to perform lead-based paint stabilization/abatement activities at homes where we cleaned the yards. This work complements the yard cleanups by removing other indoor and exterior sources (most likely lead-based paint) of lead contamination. IDPH will know by the end of this year if they will be funded.
- We will finish the design for capping the Taracorp slag pile at 16th and Cleveland Blvd. by the end of this year. We anticipate that work on placing the cap, thus removing an additional source of lead emissions to the environment, will begin by Spring of 1997.
- We purchased a special vacuum called a High Efficiency Particulate Arrestor (HEPA) that can be used by residents to insure that they collect as much lead dust from inside their homes as possible. This interior cleanup of the house is highly recommended and will complement the exterior soil removal program.

We believe that the proper way to remove the lead contamination problem in Granite City and the surrounding communities is to address lead exposures that exist both outside and inside the homes. That is why the above actions serve to complement the aggressive soil removal program. Residents should also have as much information as possible on any possible lead exposure that they or their family may have experienced and what steps residents could take to minimize any exposure. Therefore, until EPA completes its soil lead removal and paint abatement work, we are encouraging residents to have their children's blood tested for lead. You must contact your local physician to receive these tests. This will inform you of any potential lead exposures you might have had and can help in identifying personal actions that can be taken to minimize any exposure to lead and lead dust.

EPA is pleased that we can continue our lead cleanup program in a smooth and reasonable fashion. We are also pleased that other complementary steps are being taken to remove other lead dust exposures to residents in order to improve public health. Should you have any questions on the soil removal program or other portions of the superfund cleanup, feel free to call me at (312) 353-1149. You can also contact U.S. EPA's project managers Brad Bradley at (312) 886-4742 or Sheri Bianchin at (312) 886-4745. You can always reach us toll-free during regular business hours at (800) 621-8431.

Sincerely,



John P. Perrecone
Community Involvement Coordinator